

*United States Marine Corps  
School of Advanced Warfighting  
Marine Corps University  
2076 South Street  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia 22134-5068*

## **MASTER OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES**

***TITLE: PREPOSITIONING REALIGNMENT***

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF OPERATIONAL STUDIES

**AUTHOR: MAJOR DAVID NATHANSON,  
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS**

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2005-2006**

---

---

Mentor: _____	
Approved: _____	
Date: _____	

Mentor: _____	
Approved: _____	
Date: _____	

Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>2006</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2006 to 00-00-2006</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Prepositioning Realignment</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>United States Marine Corps,School of Advanced Warfighting, Marine Corps University,2076 South Street, Marine Corps Combat Development Command,Quantico,VA,22134-5068</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>23</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## Table of Contents

Disclaimer.....	ii
Executive Summary.....	iii
Introduction.....	1
A Vision for the Future.....	2
Sea Power 21.....	3
The Changing World Order.....	4
Globalization.....	5
Fourth Generation Warfare.....	5
Functioning Core and Gap Nations.....	6
Current Location of Prepositioned Assets.....	7
Current Location of Functioning Core and Gap Nations.....	7
Future Missions for 2015 MAGTF.....	8
Location of Prepositioned Assets to Support Future Operations .....	8
Need for a New Prepositioning Objective.....	9
Redundancy in Prepositioning.....	10
Is there a Need for Change?.....	11
Need for NALMEB and Mediterranean MPSRON.....	12
The Need for Flexibility.....	13
Shifting Paradigm.....	14
Conclusion.....	15
Bibliography.....	16

## ***DISCLAIMER***

THE OPINIONS AND CONCLUSIONS EXPRESSED HEREIN ARE THOSE OF THE INDIVIDUAL STUDENT AND DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE VIEWS OF EITHER THE MARINE CORPS SCHOOL OF ADVANCED WARFIGHTING OR ANY OTHER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY. REFERENCES TO THIS STUDY SHOULD INCLUDE THE FOREGOING STATEMENT.

QUOTATION FROM, ABSTRACTION FROM, OR REPRODUCTION OF ALL OR ANY PART OF THIS DOCUMENT IS PERMITTED PROVIDED PROPER ACKNOWLEDGMENT IS MADE.

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**TITLE:** Prepositioning Realignment

**AUTHOR:** Major David Nathanson, United States Marine Corps

**THESIS:** The Marine Corps' prepositioning programs need to be altered to support the strategic, security, fiscal, and operational realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

### **DISCUSSION:**

- **Current Locations:** The current prepositioning program locations do not support the likely areas where future MAGTF Operations will be executed. Globalization and potential failed states leading to increased instability in regions will force the Marine Corps to operate in a wide variety of areas that are not necessarily aligned with current prepositioning program locations.
- **Current Equipment Density Lists:** Planned EDLs for 2015 are not synchronized with the Navy or Marine Corps visions for operations in 2015. Seapower 21, the concept of seabasing, and the realities of Joint Warfighting require that the EDLs be changed to mirror operational design, strategic realities and the Corps' vision for the future.
- **Type of Operations:** The current and planned prepositioning programs are not designed to maximize support for the likely operations and missions to be conducted in 2105. Military operations other than war (MOOTW) and small wars will characterize the types of missions the Marine Corps will execute in 2015. Current prepositioning programs are designed to support large-scale conventional operations against a near-peer competitor employing Soviet or Chinese style doctrine.

**CONCLUSION:** Through careful analysis and planning, the Marine Corps can do a better job of aligning our prepositioning programs with the strategic, fiscal, and operational realities of 2015. The programs need to be altered to support the types of operations the Marine Corps should expect to conduct in the future and support rapid and flexible deployment to the likely areas where these operations will take place. The Marine Corps needs to change the equipment density lists of the items it prepositions to better support the Navy Vision of Seapower 21. Seabasing is a fundamental component of Seapower 21, and our prepositioning programs should support that vision. The current MPF program is based on the notion of establishing a large footprint ashore to support the arrival and assembly phase of a MAGTF operation. This is not synchronized with the seabasing vision that has forces deploying to a seabase and then projecting power directly to an objective area and back to the seabase once the objectives have been met. New inter and intra theater lift assets will enable to Marine Corps to rapidly project power to locations where MAGTF operations will occur. This reality should be reflected in the prepositioning objectives that are the foundation of the prepositioning programs.

*What has never before been tried within the profession of arms invariably invites more opposition than support.*<sup>1</sup>

**-S.L.A. Marshall**

---

<sup>1</sup> S.L.A. Marshall, *The Fatal Decisions*, William Sloane Associates, New York, 1956, p. viii.

The current prepositioning programs need to be altered to support the strategic, security, fiscal, and operational realities of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The current practice of prepositioning assets based on old strategic paradigms and planning assumptions requires adjustment. The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate how the Marine Corps can better align its prepositioning program with Marine Corps Warfighting in 2015 and beyond. This paper will provide specific recommendations for changes that will enable the programs to support the way we will fight and employ prepositioned assets in the future based on how and where the Marine Corps could find itself employed in 2015 and beyond and how its' prepositioning programs will be used to support these future operations. Geographic prepositioning programs as well as maritime prepositioned programs are critical to this analysis. There are larger fiscal and political realities that effect military decisions about prepositioned assets, but this paper will center on needed changes to enhance the prepositioning programs for 2015 and beyond.

### **A Vision for the Future: Sea Power 21**

The Chief of Naval Operations and the Commandant of the Marine Corps have articulated their visions for the future in the Sea Power 21 Concept (See Figure 1). This road map for the future details how the Navy-Marine Corps Team will be employed to support future expeditionary operations. The three main principles of Sea Power 21 are Sea Strike – projecting precise and persistent offensive power, Sea Shield – projecting global defensive assurance, and Sea basing – projecting joint operational independence.<sup>2</sup> The last principle, sea basing, will be closely linked to maritime prepositioning force (MPF) operations in the future.

Sea basing is the core of “Sea Power 21.” It is about placing at sea—to an extent greater than ever before—capabilities critical to joint and coalition operational success: offensive and defensive firepower, maneuver forces, command and

---

<sup>2</sup> Admiral Vern Clark, USN, “Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities” *Proceedings*, October 2002, p. 33.

control, and logistics. By doing so, it minimizes the need to build up forces and supplies ashore, reduces their vulnerability, and enhances operational mobility...<sup>3</sup>

The current MPF concept does not match operationally with the Sea Power 21 concept of sea basing. One of the fundamental impacts of sea basing will be a minimum reliance on land infrastructures.<sup>4</sup> The MPF Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) of the future will be able to maneuver directly from a sea base to an objective as part of decisive operations. The need for a large footprint ashore to support command and control, combat, combat support, and combat service support operations in the joint operating area (JOA) is mitigated. This operational concept should be reflected in the prepositioning objective (PO) that supports the 2015 MPF. The vision of a 2015 Marine Expeditionary Brigade reflects an equipment density list (EDL) more in line with a reduced footprint ashore but the projected 2015 EDL does not reflect a reduced footprint ashore concept.<sup>5</sup>

The 2015 MEB EDL spreadsheet lists 721 entries for the Command Element of the 2015 MEB, 2313 entries for the Ground Combat Element (GCE), 2473 entries for the Air Combat Element (ACE), and 1141 entries for the Combat Service Support Element (CSSE).<sup>6</sup> The totals listed on this equipment density list do not represent a reduction from the current PO and are not synchronized with the concept of a sea base and reduced footprint ashore. The totals listed are based on a traditional Reception, Staging, Onward Movement and Integration (RSO&I) plan that support the entire MEB going ashore and establishing positions in the area of operations. A cursory comparison of the current MEB EDL and the 2015 EDL will reveal that there is no

---

<sup>3</sup> Vice Admiral Charles W. Moore, Jr., USN, and Lieutenant General Edward Hanlon, Jr. USMC, "Sea Basing: Operational Independence for a New Century," *Proceedings*, January 2003, p. 80.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.36.

<sup>5</sup> Plans, Policy, and Operations Section, Headquarters USMC, 2015 MEB EDL Totals, 20 Feb 2004  
[http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB\\_EDL\\_TOTALS\\_012004%20\(11%20FEB%2004\).xls](http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB_EDL_TOTALS_012004%20(11%20FEB%2004).xls).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*





Figure 1<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup><http://www.chinfo.navy.mil/navpalib/cno/proceedings.html>, pg 2.

reduction in items that are prepositioned to support a reduced footprint ashore. One such example can be found in comparing the amount of maintenance shelters reflected on both EDLs. The current MEB EDL has (12) A2335, 10 foot maintenance shelters listed on it while the 2015 MEB EDL has (20) planned for prepositioning. Another example can be found in the total number of A2336, 20 foot maintenance shelters found on the EDLs. The current EDL lists (13) while the 2015 EDL lists (26). These shelters are designed to be used in support of all echelons of maintenance and require a power source and secure environment. This is not how the Marine Corps will conduct operations in the future. Enhanced sea-based joint command and control, heavy equipment transfer, intra-theater high-speed sealift, improved vertical delivery methods, integrated joint logistics, rotational crewing infrastructure, and international data-sharing network capabilities will all be employed to support 2015 operations.<sup>8</sup> Based on this concept, the 2015 MEB EDL can and should be reduced to support the concept currently being advocated by the Chief of Naval Operations and Commandant of the Marine Corps.

### **The Changing World Order**

The Department of Defense 1-4-2-1 defense strategy<sup>9</sup> will continue to drive military readiness and procurements in 2015 and beyond. The Marine Corps prepositioning programs require adjustment if the strategic realities of the new century are to be met. The Marine Corps currently has two prepositioning programs - one geographic and one maritime. These programs provide the foundation for rapid deployment and employment of MAGTFs in response to emerging crisis or in support of the 1-4-2-1 strategy. These programs are located worldwide in central positions

---

<sup>8</sup> Admiral Vern Clark, USN, “Sea Power 21: Projecting Decisive Joint Capabilities” *Proceedings*, October 2002, p. 36.

<sup>9</sup> Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, eds., *Strategy and Force Planning*, 4<sup>th</sup> ed., 2004, pp 506-511. The “1-4-2-1” strategy requires capabilities to defend the homeland and fight the war against terrorism, deter forward in four critical regions, swiftly defeat enemy efforts in two overlapping areas, while preserving the President’s option to win decisively in one conflict concurrently.

that facilitate rapid force closure to potential area of operations. (See Figures 2) The current prepositioned locations were picked based on the strategic realities of the 1980s and 1990s. The Marine Corps needs to relocate its prepositioned assets to support the more likely areas where MPF MAGTFs will be employed in the future.

Globalization - the worldwide phenomenon of technological, economic, political, and cultural exchanges, brought about by modern communications, transportation, and legal infrastructure as well as the political choice to consciously open cross-border links in trade and finance<sup>10</sup> and Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW) - any war in which one of the major participants is not a state but rather a violent ideological network<sup>11</sup> will have a profound effect on the United States' National Security Strategy (NSS) and the National Military Strategy (NMS). The strategic realities 15-20 years from now will change the way the United States applies military power to protect its national interests. Globalization and 4GW will result in an increase in small wars scenarios that the military will be called into action. Potential operations against non-state actors and access denial scenarios will require changes in the way the military projects power. The Department of Defense (DOD) will need to transform itself in order to meet the challenges of the future. Declining resources and adaptive adversaries are forcing the services to reassess force structure requirements and operational concepts.<sup>12</sup> DOD will need to identify new ways to plan, prepare for, and conduct future military operations. The demands of the changing security environment will require the Marine Corps to focus its effort on small wars proficiency supported by the Seapower 21 Concept of seabasing.

In his book *The Pentagon's New Map*, Thomas Barnett describes the regions where the United States will operate in the future. He details how the world is separated into two distinct

---

<sup>10</sup> <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/globalization>

<sup>11</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fourth\\_Gen\\_War](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/fourth_Gen_War)

<sup>12</sup> Ratcliff, R. *Strategy is Execution* (Newport: Naval War College, 2005), 1.

entities. Barnett introduces the reader to the notion of the Functioning Core and Functioning Gap. He describes the Core Nations as those that successfully integrate themselves into a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent or globalized.<sup>13</sup> He describes the Gap Nations as those that are largely disconnected from the global economy and the rule sets that define its stability.<sup>14</sup> (See Figure 3) Barnett theorizes that the Gap Nations pose the greatest challenge because of their instability and constitute likely areas where the U.S. military will operate in the future. The military will spend a preponderance of its operational time attempting to infuse stability, democracy, and economic prosperity as it attempts to minimize human suffering in these areas. Barnett argues that it is in our best interest to bring the gap nations into the core if we are to preserve our national security and promote stability.

Many of the Gap Nations Barnett describes are located in the littorals of the world. The Marine Corps will need to change its focus to meet the demands of unfamiliar environments and strategic realities. The type of fighting that characterized the World Wars, Desert Storm and the March-April 2003 phases of Operation Iraqi Freedom are not the types of fights the Marine Corps can expect to fight in the future. The Marine Corps conducted many successful small wars, and it should transform itself to remain the force of choice for MOOTW. Prepositioning programs will continue to enable a force in readiness to conduct successful MOOTW operations in the future. The Marine Corps should take advantage of the opportunity to innovate and remain relevant by adjusting its' prepositioned assets to support the likely missions of the future. The current prepositioning programs enable the Marine Corps to conduct large conventional operations but are not flexible enough to support the dynamic nature of small wars.

---

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Barnett, *The Pentagon's New Map* (New York: Putnam Books, 2004), pg 8.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., pg 8.



Figure 2<sup>15</sup>



**DISCONNECTEDNESS DEFINES DANGER** Problem areas requiring American attention (outlined) are, in the author's analysis, called the Gap. Shrinking the Gap is possible only by stopping the ability of terrorist networks to access the Core via the "seam states" that lie along the Gap's bloody boundaries. In this war on terrorism, the U.S. will place a special emphasis on cooperation with these states. What are the classic seam states? Mexico, Brazil, South Africa, Morocco, Algeria, Greece, Turkey, Pakistan, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia.

Figure 3<sup>16</sup>

<sup>15</sup> David Nathanson, Major USMC, *The Seventh Marines MPF SOP: Version 2*, dated January 2002.

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com/published/pentagonsnewmap.htm>

The range of likely missions for a future MPF MAGTF reads like a bowl of “Acronym Soup”: Humanitarian Operations (HA), Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), Disaster Relief Operations (DA), Peacekeeping (PKO) and Peace Enforcement Operations (PEO) are exactly the types of missions that the Marine Corps has proven itself capable of performing professionally. The Marine Corps should expect to perform these missions with increasing frequency over the next 10-15 years, as the Department of Defense and the United States responds to the changes in the security environment. The NSS and NMS will focus heavily on these types of missions as a means to promote democracy and stability around the troubled regions of the world. National security will demand that the U.S. Military get involved in many of the regions around the world that Barnett has identified as likely trouble spots. Based on past experience and success in small wars, the Marine Corps should take this opportunity to adjust its prepositioning programs to better support a rapid response across the entire spectrum of conflict and tailor our programs to support the operational concepts of 2015 and beyond.

The current prepositioned assets are not optimally located to support future MPF operations in the gap regions. The Marine Corps should eliminate its Mediterranean MPF Squadron and redistribute the assets to the Indian and Pacific Ocean Squadrons. In addition, the Marine Corps should establish a geographic prepositioning program in the Australia-New Zealand Region in order to conduct maritime operations in that part of the world. The NALMEB program was established to counter a Soviet excursion into continental Europe. Russia still maintains a significant military force, but there exist new forces that can be brought to bear to counter an aggressive Russian strategy. The unification of Germany, the addition of former Soviet-bloc nations to NATO, the expansion of NATO roles and missions, and the ability of the United States’ Military Sealift Command to transit the Atlantic ocean faster than ever before

represent an opportunity for the Marine Corps to reposition its geographic prepositioned assets to hedge against the more likely locations where future operations will occur or as a deterrent to an emerging and aggressive near peer competitor.

Lastly, the Marine Corps needs a new prepositioning objective (PO) as laid out in the Navy and Marine Corps Manual 2907 (NAVMC 2907). The previous paragraphs have illustrated the changes that have occurred since the inception of the prepositioning programs. Strategic realities, new enemies, complex and varied missions, and the Corps' vision for the future all signal a need for change in the PO to support future operations. The current PO supports a future fight in which the Marine Corps will find itself conducting mechanized combined arms operations against a near peer competitor employing Soviet or Chinese doctrine and tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTPs). While the potential for this type of operation does exist in the world, the Marine Corps will fight in a joint environment and the current PO does not reflect the joint realities of future conflicts or support the Marine Corps vision of how it will conduct operations in the future.

The United States can no longer afford to preposition redundant capabilities in the U.S. Army and USMC prepositioned programs. Currently, both the Marine Corps and the Army preposition main battle tanks in support of future operations. The strategic reality is such that if a conflict should emerge which main battle tanks are needed to support combat operations, both the Army and the Marine Corps will likely be employed. The Marine Corps currently plans to continue to preposition tank assets as part of the ground combat element of the MPF MEB. This equates to 228 different types of items including tanks, trucks, weapons, tool kits/sets/chests,

ammunition, repair parts, fuel, lubricants and clothing to support the GCE tank unit.<sup>17</sup> The RSO&I requirement to get this tank unit combat ready necessitates the need to establish an arrival and assembly area beyond the potential capabilities a sea base will be able to provide. Sea Power 21 and specifically the concept of seabasing are based on the operational design of limiting the footprint ashore and moving directly from the seabase to the objective area and back. The operational design will not allow for the establishment of an arrival and assembly area necessary to prepare main battle tanks for combat operations. It is more efficient to transport combat ready tanks via fast surface ship from a CONUS based sea port of embarkation (SPOE) directly to the sea base rather than prepositioning an entire tank battalions' worth of gear as part of the MPF PO.

Another area where the current PO is disjointed with future operational concepts is in the area of the MPF Enhancement Program. The current and future POs provide for the prepositioning of Naval Military Construction Battalion (NMCB) and Expeditionary Airfield (EAF) project gear and equipment as part of the MPF Enhanced Program.<sup>18</sup> The NMCB and EAF gear support the vertical and horizontal construction projects of the Sea Bees and Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) engineers. These projects support the establishment of bases and facilities ashore and the construction of an expeditionary airfield. This is not in line with the Sea Power 21 Concept. The Navy and Marine Corps are striving to reduce their footprints ashore. Fast Surface Ships (FSS) and advanced planning could enable a future joint commander to phase these supplies and equipment into theater bases ashore based on mission timelines if

---

<sup>17</sup> Plans, Policy, and Operations Section, Headquarters USMC, 2015 MEB EDL Totals, 20 Feb 2004  
[http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB\\_EDL\\_TOTALS\\_012004%20\(11%20FEB%2004\).xls](http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB_EDL_TOTALS_012004%20(11%20FEB%2004).xls).

<sup>18</sup> Plans, Policy, and Operations Section, Headquarters USMC, 2015 MEB EDL Totals, 20 Feb 2004  
[http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB\\_EDL\\_TOTALS\\_012004%20\(11%20FEB%2004\).xls](http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60/mpf-f/2015MEB_EDL_TOTALS_012004%20(11%20FEB%2004).xls)



build-up is required. Each MPF squadron currently has the MPF Enhancement Package as part of the PO. Not all OPLANS and potential contingencies will require the establishment of an EAF in the AO. The footprint for this equipment is large and its elimination from MPF ships will allow for the embarkation of more supplies and vehicles better suited for the missions the Marine Corps will likely execute in the future.

### **Is there a need for change?**

Many logisticians and operators will vehemently argue against the proposed changes of this paper. Proponents of the current system will argue that we cannot do away with the NALMEB Program because of the programs strategic significance. The program enables the following: supports a NATO ally, builds consensus within NATO and supports US position in Brussels.<sup>19</sup> Others will cite economic reasons why the program should continue to exist. The economic argument is based on the fact that Norway is the third largest petroleum exporter to the US and provides the US with 2.78 billion dollars worth of exports while we export 1.79 billion dollars worth of goods to Norway.<sup>20</sup> Lastly, some will argue that the location of Norway alone justifies the continuation of the program. This argument is based on the premise that Norway's proximity to the European Continent is vital for the projection of military power onto the continent in response to enemy military operations. There are other ways to achieve these results that do not require a permanent prepositioning program. The United States can increase the number of annual combined ground exercises conducted with Norway, conduct port calls with naval forces, increase command and control exercises and reinforce NATO commitments as part of the National Security Strategy in lieu of placing equipment and assets on the ground that can be better positioned to support future operations.

---

<sup>19</sup> PP&O, HQMC "NALMEB Brief to the DC PP&O", 6 Oct 2003, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

The recommendation to eliminate the Mediterranean MPF Squadron will also be countered with similar arguments raised against the notion of eliminating the NALMEB program. Proponents of the status quo cite the need to have prepositioned assets in the Mediterranean in order to quickly deal with emerging crisis. The need to demonstrate our resolve and commitment to defending our long standing allies in the Mediterranean is also important. In addition proponents of the status quo will state that the Mediterranean MPF squadron is for any potential crisis in Africa since that region is the responsibility of European Command (EUCOM). This counter argument will be based on the notion that EUCOM will not be able to respond rapidly to crisis, emergencies, or tasks from the National Command Authority.

The last argument is the notion of flexibility. Proponents of this counter argument will state that the MPF ships need to be loaded with equipment and supplies to respond to any and every potential type of military operation. This argument will demand that the Marine Corps continue to preposition similar capabilities on all the MPF squadrons in order to ensure maximum flexibility to respond to crisis in any clime and place. To reduce the amount of TAMCN items prepositioned would reduce the capabilities of the squadron and make the future MPF MAGTF less responsive and capable. The very nature of the MPF program requires that the maximum amount of gear and equipment be prepositioned in order to support the potential “what if” scenarios.

### **Shifting Paradigm**

S.L.A. Marshall’s quote at the beginning of this paper is a reminder of the need to stay relevant. Today’s prepositioning programs are not in line with the strategic, economic and operational realities of 2015 and beyond. With the collapse of the Soviet Union and the potential

formation of a unified Europe through the European Union, the likelihood of a major theater war requiring the employment of a MPF MEB on continental Europe is far too low to justify having assets prepositioned in Norway and afloat in the Mediterranean. The United States would do well to hedge on the fact that the NATO Forces in conjunction with the Joint Forces currently assigned in Europe could respond to the type of crisis that are likely to emerge in Europe in the future. The relocation of the MPF Squadron to the Indian Ocean will allow the National Command Authority to respond to crisis in the Middle-East or Africa as they develop. Fast surface shipping will allow the United States to project power rapidly from CONUS to a sea base located in the vicinity of West Africa in order to respond to emerging crisis in that region. Fast surface shipping and the receipt of the remainder of the C-17 buy will lead to an improved intra-theater lift capability. This will allow the United States to more rapidly project power from greater distances and close a force faster than currently capable. The use of a seabase will enable the Marine Corps to conduct operations from anywhere in the globe and move directly from that seabase to the objective.

As far as the loss of flexibility if the number and type of assets prepositioned in MPF squadrons is reduced, there are ways to actually mitigate this risk. Every Combatant Commander (COCOM) has a Theater Strategic Cooperation Plan (TSCP) that details the tasks and purposes that each service is assigned in the OPLANS and CONPLANS that support that region. Instead of putting everything on the MPF ships to respond to any and every potential crisis, the Marine Corps should align its PO with the types of missions the COCOMs actually expect them to execute in their regions. The planners of the COCOM Staffs review and adjust plans based on changes in their regions and the Marine Corps can make the POs more capable by alignment with the TSCP missions. The Marine Expeditionary Units (MEUs) at the core of the Navy's

Expeditionary Strike Groups (ESGs) of the future will provide the National Command Authority with a forward presence able to respond to unforeseen crisis or national emergencies. This enabling force can arrive in theater, assess the situation, and determine if there are capabilities or requirements needed beyond those prepositioned. Again the United States will be able to leverage improved intra-theater lift capabilities to quickly flow the delta to the seabase for follow on movement to support the crisis.

### **Recommendations for Immediate Action**

There are many things that the Marine Corps can and should do now to improve its' prepositioning programs. First, a planning and tailoring conference should be convened to review the future PO, the MEB T/O, and MEB T/E to ensure they are in line with the realities of 2015 and beyond. It is imperative that these planning documents actually reflect the way the Marine Corps is going to fight in the future and support the types of missions the Corps can expect to execute. Second, the results of this conference should be incorporated into future MPF Maintenance Management Cycles (MMC) so extraneous and extra gear and equipment not needed is removed. This will ensure that the Corps has the right gear, in the right place, to support the right missions in the future. Lastly, a scheduled periodic review should be developed in concert with the updates to the COCOM TSCPs. This action will ensure the Corps has the capability to support the needs of the COCOMs supporting the United States' National Military Strategy. These immediate actions will set the Marine Corps up for success in the future as strategic realities continue to shift and economic realities decrease the amount of extra resources in defense and service spending.

## **Conclusion**

The current Marine Corps Prepositioning Programs are not in line with the strategic, fiscal, and operational realities of the future. The enemies of the future, the type and focus of future operations, and the Navy-Marine Corps vision of the future have changed since the inception of the NALMEB and MPF Programs in the late 1970s early 1980s. The current prepositioning programs need to be adjusted to support how, where, and why the Marine Corps will conduct operations in the future. Small wars and MOOTW will dominate the operational landscape that the Corps will find itself operating. Seabases will enable the Corps to assemble at sea and move directly to an objective area without having to stop and build up forces in the area of operation. It is likely that the Marine Corps will find itself operating in the littorals in third world regions that are struggling to keep pace with the rest of the developed world. Traditional mechanized combined arms warfare will not be the norm for future Marine Corps operations. Humanitarian Operations (HA), Noncombatant Evacuation Operations (NEO), Disaster Relief Operations (DA), Peacekeeping (PKO) and Peace Enforcement Operations (PEO) are exactly the types of operations the Corps can expect to conduct with increasing frequency in the future.

Marine Corps prepositioning programs must continue to provide flexible and responsive capabilities. The location and disposition of these programs need to be re-aligned to support the future fights. Prepositioned assets need to be located where they can best support the areas where future MPF MAGTFs will operate. The Marine Corps needs to change the focus of the programs to support the strategic realities of the future. Sea Power 21, Goldwater-Nichols, the proliferation of terrorism and fourth generation warfare will continue to have a profound effect on how and where the Marine Corps will conduct future operations. If the prepositioning programs are not updated to meet current and future strategic realities they will become obsolete and limit the

chance for success in future operations. The current practice of prepositioning assets in support of old strategic paradigms and embarking assets based on shipping limitations will not support how the Corps will fight in the future. In order for these prepositioning programs to perform their intended purpose they must be updated through careful analysis of potential adversaries and conflicts and backed-up by detailed planning to identify what exactly is needed to support MAGTF of the future.

## Bibliography

- Alexander, Joseph H. The Battle History of the U.S. Marines. New York, NY: Harper Collins Publishers Inc., 1999.
- Barnett, Thomas P.M. The Pentagon's New Map: War and Peace in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. New York, NY: Putnam's Sons, 2004.
- Bush, George W. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing, 2002.
- Eccles, Henry E. Logistics in the National Defense. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press Publishers, 1959.
- General Hagee, Michael W. A Concept for Distributed Operations. Washington D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 2005.
- Lind, William S. "The Changing Face of War: Into the Fourth Generation." Marine Corps Gazette, (October 1989): 22-26.
- Mead, Walter Russell. Power, Terror, Peace, and War: America's Grand Strategy in a World at Risk. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2004.
- Major Nathanson, David. 7<sup>th</sup> Marines Maritime Prepositioning Standard Operating Procedures (Short Title 7<sup>th</sup> Marines MPF SOP): Version 2, dated January 2002.
- Ratliff, Ron. Strategy is Execution. Newport, RI: Naval War College, 2005.
- Security, Strategy, and Forces Faculty, eds., Strategy and Force Planning, 4<sup>th</sup> ed.. Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004.
- United States Joint Forces Command. CJCSM 3500.34C, Universal Joint Task List, 2002. Suffolk, VA: 2002.
- United States Joint Forces Command, J-3. Joint Publication 3-0, Doctrine for Joint Operations. Suffolk, VA: 2001.
- United States Naval War College. Sea Power 21: A Collection of Readings. Newport, RI: Naval War College Press, 2004.
- United States Marine Corps The Small Wars Manual: United States Marine Corps 1940. Manhattan, KS: Sunflower University Press, 2004.
- United States Marine Corps The Small Wars Manual/21<sup>st</sup> Century Edition. Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Combat Development Command, 2005.
- United States Marine Corps, Headquarters Marine Corps, Plans Policy and Operations Section, Maritime and Geographic Prepositioning Section (POE-60), 1 December 2005. <http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/pp&o/poe/poe-60.htm> (1December 2005).

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		FORM APPROVED - - - OMB NO. 0704-0188	
<small>public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters services, directorate for information operations and reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the office of management and budget, paperwork reduction project (0704-0188), Washington, DC 20503.</small>			
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (LEAVE BLANK)	2. REPORT DATE 14 APRIL 2006	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED <b>STUDENT RESEARCH PAPER</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE  PREPOSITIONING REALIGNMENT		5. FUNDING NUMBERS  <b>N/A</b>	
6. AUTHOR(S)  DAVID NATAHNSON, MAJOR, UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS			
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  <b>SCHOOL OF ADVANCE WARFIGHTING MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY 2076 SOUTH STREET, MCCDC, QUANTICO, VA 22134-5068</b>		8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER  <b>NONE</b>	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)  <b>SAME AS #7.</b>		10. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER:  <b>NONE</b>	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES  <b>NONE</b>			
12A. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT  <b>NO RESTRICTIONS</b>		12B. DISTRIBUTION CODE  <b>N/A</b>	
13. ABSTRACT (MAXIMUM 200 WORDS) THE CURRENT PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS NEED TO BE ALTERED TO SUPPORT THE STRATEGIC, SECURITY, FISCAL, AND OPERATIONAL REALITIES OF THE 21 <sup>ST</sup> CENTURY. THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF PREPOSITIONING ASSETS BASED ON OLD STRATEGIC PARADIGMS AND PLANNING ASSUMPTIONS REQUIRES ADJUSTMENT. THE PURPOSE OF THIS PAPER IS TO DEMONSTRATE HOW THE MARINE CORPS CAN BETTER ALIGN ITS PREPOSITIONING PROGRAM WITH MARINE CORPS WARFIGHTING IN 2015 AND BEYOND. THE PAPER WILL PROVIDE SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGES THAT WILL ENABLE THE PROGRAMS TO SUPPORT THE WAY WE WILL FIGHT AND EMPLOY PREPOSITIONED ASSETS IN THE FUTURE BASED ON HOW AND WHERE THE MARINE CORPS COULD FIND ITSELF EMPLOYED IN 2015 AND BEYOND AND HOW ITS' PREPOSITIONING PROGRAMS WILL BE USED TO SUPPORT THESE FUTURE OPERATIONS.			
14. SUBJECT TERMS (KEY WORDS ON WHICH TO PERFORM SEARCH) Maritime Prepositioning Program                      Seabasing Seapower 21    Fast Surface Shipping Globalization Fourth Generation Warfare Small Wars Military Operations Other Than War		15. NUMBER OF PAGES: 22	
		16. PRICE CODE: N/A	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT  <b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE:  <b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT  <b>UNCLASSIFIED</b>	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT  <b>NONE</b>